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PRESS RELEASE

United States Attorney

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**Subject: UNITED STATES CHARGES LAWTON PAIR WITH
FILING FALSE CLAIM FOR KATRINA RELIEF FUNDS**

John C. Richter, United States Attorney for the Western District of Oklahoma, announced today that **SEAN DONNELL WILLIAMS**, 27, and **JACQUELINE MARIE SUTTON**, 36, both of Lawton, were arrested this morning for filing a false claim for disaster assistance funds relating to Hurricane Katrina.

According to a complaint filed in federal court in Oklahoma City, Sutton applied through the internet on September 22 for Federal Emergency Management Agency assistance because Hurricane Katrina had destroyed her primary residence in Metairie, Louisiana. The complaint alleges that she requested that money be transferred electronically to a Lawton bank account controlled by Williams. The complaint further alleges that four days later, Sutton and Williams tried to obtain the disaster relief funds at Williams's bank. According to the complaint, Sutton became nervous and left the bank after bank employees attempted to confirm her identity through the Social Security Administration.

The complaint explains that further investigation revealed that Williams applied successfully for Hurricane Katrina relief funds on September 20 for a primary residence at a different address in Metairie, Louisiana, and unsuccessfully on October 1 for a primary residence at an address in New Orleans. The complaint alleges that in addition to the September 22 application, Sutton applied for relief funds on September 25 for a primary residence at an address in Baton Rouge and on October 1 for a primary residence at an address in New Orleans, both unsuccessfully. According to the complaint, postal and motor vehicle records are inconsistent with either Williams or Sutton living in Louisiana at the time of Hurricane Katrina. The complaint states further that the Lawton address that Williams and Sutton provided on all of these applications was on Williams's bank account for a month before the Hurricane Katrina disaster.

"To date, the Hurricane Katrina Task Force has charged over fifty individuals who have greedily sought to exploit others' suffering for their personal benefit. At a time when so many families are suffering from Hurricane Katrina and other disasters, we will not allow

criminals to steal taxpayer money intended to help the needy,” said U.S. Attorney Richter. “The federal government will show no tolerance for fraudulent FEMA relief claims.” Attorney General Alberto Gonzales recently created the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force to deter, investigate, and prosecute disaster-related federal crimes, such as charity fraud and insurance fraud. This task force - chaired by Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice - includes members from the FBI, the Federal Trade Commission, the Postal Inspection Service, and the Executive Office of United States Attorneys, among others.

If convicted, Williams and Sutton face a maximum potential penalty of five years’ imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000, and mandatory restitution.

The case is the result of an investigation conducted by the Oklahoma Economic Crime and Identity Theft Task Force, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Scott E. Williams.

The public is reminded that the complaint is merely an accusation and that the defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

***** End *****